

the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5661.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REAL JUSTICE FOR OUR VETERANS ACT OF 2021

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4035) to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to prioritize veterans court treatment programs that ensure equal access for racial and ethnic minorities and women, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4035

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Real Justice for Our Veterans Act of 2021”.

SEC. 2. EQUAL ACCESS TO VETERANS COURT TREATMENT PROGRAMS FOR RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES AND WOMEN.

Section 2991(i)(2) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10651(i)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(C) *REPORT.*—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this subparagraph, the Attorney General shall submit to Congress a report on the effectiveness of veterans treatment court programs. In preparing such a report, the Attorney General shall conduct a national multi-site evaluation of such programs, including an assessment of—

“(i) the population served by such programs;
“(ii) whether such programs use evidence-based treatments for substance use and mental health, including medication for addiction treatment;

“(iii) recidivism rates of participants in such programs;

“(iv) program completion rates; and

“(v) whether racial and ethnic minorities and women have equal access to such programs and an equal opportunity to complete such programs, including by collecting and analyzing data related to admission in such programs and completion of such programs, to ensure there are not disparities related to race, ethnicity, or sex.”.

SEC. 3. VETERANS PILOT PROGRAM ON PROM- ISING RETENTION MODELS.

(a) *ESTABLISHMENT.*—The Attorney General, acting through the Director of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, shall carry out a pilot program to make grants to eligible units of local government to improve retention in veterans treatment court programs (as such term is defined in section 2991 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10651)) and drug court programs.

(b) *ELIGIBILITY.*—In order to be eligible for a grant under subsection (a), a unit of local government shall operate a veterans treatment court program or a drug court.

(c) *APPLICATION.*—A unit of local government seeking a grant through the pilot program under subsection (a) shall submit to the Attorney General an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the At-

torney General may reasonably require, including—

(1) a description of the therapeutic or treatment modality that the unit of local government plans to implement and data to support the use of the therapeutic or treatment modality, including information showing how the therapeutic or treatment modality will promote retention in and completion of veterans treatment court programs and drug court programs; and

(2) detailed plans on how the applicant would test the efficacy of the therapeutic or treatment modality.

(d) *REPORTING METRICS.*—Not later than 180 days after receiving a grant under subsection (a), a unit of local government shall submit to the Attorney General a report, which includes demographic information of participants in the veterans treatment court program, and completion rates of such participants. The Attorney General shall develop guidelines for the report required under this subsection.

(e) *AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.*—There is authorized to be appropriated \$3,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2022 through 2027 to carry out this section.

SEC. 4. ADMISSION OF VETERANS TO DRUG COURTS.

In the case of a jurisdiction that does not operate a veterans treatment court program (as such term is defined in section 2991 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10651)), but that does operate a drug court under part EE of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10611 et seq.), a veteran who would be eligible to participate in a veterans treatment court program may participate in the drug court, including a veteran who is a violent offender (as such term is defined in section 2953(a) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10613(a))).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BENTZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am the proud sponsor and proud of H.R. 4035. The Real Justice for Our Veterans Act is before the House for consideration, and I ask all my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill today.

I authored the Real Justice for Our Veterans Act to help our Nation's justice-involved veterans to improve the delivery of services in veterans and drug courts. The bill before the House today has three discrete aims.

First, the bill would expand data collection regarding the effectiveness of veterans courts.

Second, it authorizes a pilot program that would investigate and promote promising retention models in veterans and drug courts.

Lastly, and perhaps most critically, it would open up drug treatment courts to veterans in areas where there may not be a veterans court, so very important for those who have interacted with our committee and have made note of the fact that there are many jurisdictions in the United States where there are veterans and no veterans court.

Each of these critical changes would promote higher participation and higher rehabilitation of veterans who have mental health and substance abuse issues.

The need for this legislation is painfully clear. Generations of veterans have served abroad in recent decades, and we must redouble our efforts to support veterans and expand the services they need to thrive.

The rapid expansion of veterans treatment courts speaks not only to the need for such courts but, more importantly, to the benefit of the specialized approach to rehabilitation and treatment the courts offer.

The holistic treatment model, which includes input from the prosecutor, defense counsel, and the court, centers on the supervised comprehensive treatment provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs or community organizations.

Because each veterans court offers different management services, we need to do more to identify which treatment options are successful so that these promising models can be expanded. That is why the elements of the Real Justice for Our Veterans Act are so important.

The bill also calls for additional data on the demographics of who is referred to veterans treatment courts and asks for information on completion rates. This information will be critical to advancing our understanding of how the programs are used.

Additionally, the legislation authorizes a new pilot program that will allow DOJ to test promising retention programs that promote greater enrollment and participation by veterans through the duration of their treatment program.

□ 1245

Legislative efforts to strengthen veterans treatment courts have yielded bipartisan support in the past, and the same is true today.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD), for cosponsoring the bill and working with me in this effort.

I urge my colleagues to take a look at their congressional districts. You will probably find places of refuge for our veterans; some may be homeless. I have several facilities in my congressional district that deal with the housing of homeless veterans, or deal with services for homeless veterans, or deal with services, period, for veterans.

I can assure you that a comforting judicial system on veterans who, because of combat injuries, PTSD, and

other issues dealing with them, losing their family, being separated from the family, being miles away from their home because of combat-impacted injuries, that the judicial system is one they may come in contact with.

To be able to have courts that are responsive to their service and their record, and to be able to help move them away from the judicial system is a tribute to our commitment to the service of our men and women.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to continue this record of support for veterans treatment courts by voting for this bill today.

I am proud that H.R. 4035, the "Real Justice for Our Veterans Act" is before the House for consideration and I ask all my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill today.

I authored the Real Justice for Our Veterans Act to help our nation's justice-involved veterans and to improve the delivery of services in veterans and drug courts.

The bill before the House today has three discrete aims.

First, the bill would expand data collection regarding the effectiveness of veterans courts.

Second, it authorizes a pilot program that would investigate and promote promising retention models in veterans and drug courts.

And lastly, and perhaps most critically, it would open up drug treatment courts to veterans in areas where there may not be a veterans court.

Each of these critical changes would promote higher participation and higher rehabilitation of veterans who have mental health and substance abuse issues.

The need for this legislation is painfully clear. Generations of veterans have served abroad in recent decades and we must redouble our efforts to support veterans and expand the services they need to thrive.

The rapid expansion of veterans treatment courts speaks not only to the need for such courts but more importantly to the benefit of the specialized approach to rehabilitation and treatment the courts offer.

The wholistic treatment model, which includes input from the prosecutor, defense counsel, and the court, centers on the supervised comprehensive treatment provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs or community organizations.

Because each veterans court offers different treatment services, we need to do more to identify which treatment options are successful so that these promising models can be expanded.

That's why these elements of the "Real Justice for Our Veterans Act" are so important.

The bill also calls for additional data collection on the demographics of who is referred to veterans treatment courts and asks for information on completion rates. This information will be critical to advancing our understanding of how the programs are used.

Additionally, the legislation authorizes a new pilot program that will allow DOJ to test promising retention programs that promote greater enrollment and participation by veterans through the duration of their treatment program.

Legislative efforts to strengthen veterans treatment courts have yielded bipartisan support in the past, and the same is true today.

I thank our colleague, the gentleman from Florida, Representative JOHN RUTHERFORD, for

cosponsoring this bill and working with me in this effort.

I urge my colleagues to continue this record of support for veterans treatment courts by voting for this bill today.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BENTZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4035, the Real Justice for Our Veterans Act of 2021.

Unfortunately, many of our Nation's veterans suffer from substance abuse disorders, mental health conditions, and trauma. According to data from the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics, approximately 60 percent of combat veterans in our Nation's prisons have reported mental health disorders.

Veterans treatment court programs are modeled after other specialized treatment court programs, such as drug treatment courts to provide services specific to meet the unique needs of veterans. Veterans treatment courts are not only designed to benefit veterans in the criminal justice system, but taxpayers as well.

These treatment programs lower recidivism for participants who complete them, saving money that otherwise would have been spent on incarceration.

H.R. 4035 will expand data collection on these treatment programs to ensure that our veterans are getting the most effective treatment possible.

H.R. 4035 also authorizes pilot programs to make grants to improve retention rates in veterans treatment court programs. It allows veterans in jurisdictions that do not operate veterans court programs to participate in drug courts instead.

Congress must do everything in its power to protect our Nation's veterans and ensure that they get the very best treatment. This is exactly what this bill does.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

MR. BENTZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Texas has 16 minutes remaining.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this has been a journey for me in terms of dealing with veterans who are in need of help.

Some years ago, I joined with the late and former member of the military, Chairman Murtha, to bring a satellite site to my congressional district for post-traumatic stress disorder. The center was outside of the veterans hospital but could be accessed by veterans through TRICARE.

So I have seen the needs of veterans who have experienced the impact of combat, the impact of the service, but are still committed to duty. This particular legislation responds and respects that duty. That is the duty that we owe to those who have fallen along the highway of challenges.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure that we have the treatment for those who have experienced substance abuse, as well as that we have the judicial system that responds to that need. It may cross the gamut of substance abuse, alcohol abuse, and of course, encounters with the criminal justice system.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman NADLER of the Judiciary Committee. And I thank members of the Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security Subcommittee because it shows that our work is expansive. It includes rehabilitation and treatment and fairness and justice. Finding ways to have people steer away from incarceration and, of course, encounters over and over again with the judicial system or the criminal justice system.

So veterans treatment court programs around the country have successfully provided support to veterans struggling with substance abuse or mental health issues. We have seen them work effectively. The need to expand veterans treatment court services is real and immediate.

We look forward to this bill moving in the other body and the President of the United States signing it, saying to veterans, we want to be helpful to you in your time of celebration of who you are as a veteran, but also in your time of need.

Based on the most recent data, the Bureau of Justice Statistics estimates that approximately 181,500 veterans are incarcerated in jail as well as State and Federal prisons. Mr. Speaker, that is too many who have been lost to the abusing of drugs, alcohol, and substance abuse.

H.R. 4035 would help rehabilitate justice-involved veterans and ultimately make for a safer community and give them a better quality of life; and might I say, give their families a better quality of life.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in voting in favor of this important bill.

Mr. Speaker, veterans treatment court programs around the country have successfully provided support to veterans struggling with substance abuse or mental health issues.

The need to expand veterans treatment court services is real and immediate.

Based on the most recent data, the Bureau of Justice Statistics estimates that approximately 181,500 veterans are incarcerated in jails as well as state and federal prisons.

H.R. 4035 would help rehabilitate justice-involved veterans and ultimately make for safer communities.

I urge my colleagues to join me in voting in favor of this important bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4035, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

JAIME ZAPATA AND VICTOR AVILA FEDERAL OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES PROTECTION ACT

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 921) to amend title 18, United States Code, to further protect officers and employees of the United States, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 921

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Jaime Zapata and Victor Avila Federal Officers and Employees Protection Act”.

SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) since the founding of the Nation, officers and employees of the United States Government have dutifully and faithfully served the United States overseas, including in situations that place them at serious risk of death or bodily harm, in order to preserve, protect, and defend the interests of the United States;

(2) securing the safety of such officers and employees while serving overseas is of paramount importance and is also in furtherance of preserving, protecting, and defending the interests of the United States;

(3) Federal courts, including the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, and the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, have correctly interpreted section 1114 of title 18, United States Code, to apply extraterritorially to protect officers and employees of the United States while the officers and employees are serving abroad;

(4) in a case involving a violent attack against Federal law enforcement officers Jaime Zapata and Victor Avila, a panel of a Federal court of appeals held that section 1114 of title 18, United States Code, does not apply extraterritorially, creating a split among the United States circuit courts of appeals;

(5) in light of the opinion described in paragraph (4), it has become necessary for Congress to clarify the original intent that section 1114 of title 18, United States Code, applies extraterritorially; and

(6) it is further appropriate to clarify the original intent that sections 111 and 115 of title 18, United States Code, apply extraterritorially as well.

SEC. 3. PROTECTION OF OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE UNITED STATES.

Part I of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in section 111, by adding at the end the following:

“(c) EXTRATERRITORIAL JURISDICTION.—There is extraterritorial jurisdiction over the conduct prohibited by this section.”;

(2) in section 115, by adding at the end the following:

“(e) There is extraterritorial jurisdiction over the conduct prohibited by this section.”; and

(3) in section 1114—

(A) by inserting “(a) IN GENERAL.—” before “Whoever”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

“(b) EXTRATERRITORIAL JURISDICTION.—There is extraterritorial jurisdiction over the conduct prohibited by this section.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BENTZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 921, the Jaime Zapata and Victor Avila Federal Officers and Employees Protection Act. This Senate-passed bill would correct a manifest wrong by making clear that the law prohibiting the killing of Federal employees extends beyond American borders.

Our Justice Department must have the ability to ensure that anyone who kills or attempts to kill individuals serving our country outside the United States are brought to justice under current law.

The tragic circumstance that makes this bill necessary bears repeating. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Special Agents Jaime Zapata and Victor Avila were assigned abroad to protect American interests. In early 2011, while traveling in a convoy near San Luis Potosi, Mexico, the American agents were attacked by agents of the Los Zetas drug cartel.

In the firefight, both Agents Zapata and Avila were shot. Tragically, Agent Zapata died from his wounds. A thorough investigation brought the perpetrators of this heinous act to the United States to stand to account for the acts, and they were convicted. Yet, justice remained unfulfilled.

In January 2020, the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals vacated the murder conviction of two Los Zetas cartel members responsible for the murder of Agent Zapata and attempted murder of Agent Avila.

In doing so, the Court of Appeals found that the law we are amending today did not contain an adequate expression that it was intended to apply to crimes committed outside the United States.

Today, we correct this errant and apparently unfair judicial interpretation.

This bill does not extend criminal laws or penalties, nor does it create a new crime, it merely clarifies Congress' original intent.

Because of this bill, the United States Government may prosecute anyone who killed or attempted to kill a Federal officer or employee, whether they be agents or diplomats, while they were performing their official duties outside of the United States. The rule of law will prevail.

Interestingly enough, since the killings in that tragic incident, we have seen a number of attacks against many of our outstanding Federal employees, diplomats, and others overseas. That is all this bill would do, but it is an important thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my fellow Texans, Mr. CUELLAR and Mr. MCCAUL, for leading the House companion to this bill, and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation out of basic and endearing justice for all, and for the families of these men.

I rise in support of S. 921, the “Jaime Zapata and Victor Avila Federal Officers and Employees Protection Act.” This Senate-passed bill would correct a manifest wrong by making clear that the law prohibiting the killing of federal employees extends beyond American borders.

Our Justice Department must have the ability to ensure that anyone who kills or attempts to kill individuals serving our country outside the United States are brought to justice under current law.

The tragic circumstances that make this bill necessary bear repeating. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Special Agents Jaime Zapata and Victor Avila were assigned abroad to protect American interests. In early 2011, while traveling in a convoy near San Luis Potosi, Mexico, the American agents were attacked by members of the Los Zetas drug cartel.

In the firefight, both Agents Zapata and Agent Avila were shot. Tragically Agent Zapata died from his wounds.

A thorough investigation brought the perpetrators of this heinous attack to the United States to stand to account for the acts, and they were convicted.

Yet, justice remained unfulfilled. In January 2020, the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals vacated the murder convictions of two Los Zetas cartel members responsible for the murder of Agent Zapata and attempted murder of Agent Avila.

In doing so, the Court of Appeals found that the law we are amending today did not contain an adequate expression that it was intended to apply to crimes committed outside the United States.

Today, we correct this errant judicial interpretation.

This bill does not extend criminal laws or penalties. Nor does it create a new crime. It merely clarifies Congress's original intent.

Because of this bill, the United States government may prosecute anyone who killed or attempted to kill a federal officer or employee, whether they be agents or diplomats, while they were performing their official duties outside of the United States. The rule of law will prevail.

That is all this bill would do but it is an important thing to do.